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Total Number of Pages in This Submission

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Application Number

10/038,949

Filing Date

12/31/2001

First Named Inventor

Seyfullah H. Oguz

Art Unit

2613

Examiner Name

Lee, Y. Young

Attorney Docket Number

10830.0079.NPUS00

ENCLOSURES (Check all that apply)

Fee Transmittal Form



Fee Attached



Amendment/Reply



After Final



Affidavits/declaration(s)



Extension of Time Request



Express Abandonment Request



Information Disclosure Statement



Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)

Reply to Missing Parts/
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Drawing(s)



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Appeal Communication to Board
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Reply is a Reponse to Notification of Non-Compliant
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Firm Name

Novak Druce & Quigg, LLP.

Signature

Richard C. Auchterlonie

Printed name

Richard C. Auchterlonie

Date

4 Jan. 2006

Reg. No.

30,607

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Signature

Richard C. Auchterlonie

Typed or printed name

Richard C. Auchterlonie

Date

4 Jan. 2006

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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Oguz et al.

Serial No.: 10/038,949 Confirm 2180

Filed: 12/31/2001

For: Edge Detection Based on Variable-
 Length Codes of Block Coded Video

Group Art Unit: 2613

Examiner: Lee, Y. Young

Atty. Dkt. No.: 10830.0079.NPUS00

RESPONSE TO NOTIFICATION OF NON-COMPLIANT APPEAL BRIEF

Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief, please find enclosed an amended brief.

Pages 2-6, 8-10, 13-17, and 19-22 of the Amended Appeal Brief are the same as pages 2-6, 8-10, 13-17, and 19-22 of the original Appeal Brief filed on October 18, 2005. The other pages have been changed as follows. On page 1, the Express Mail Label has been updated, the title has been changed on page 1 to "Amended Appeal Brief ...," a reference has been added to the Notice of Appeal filing date and the Final Official Action date, and the Deposit Account authorization statement has been changed to authorize the deduction of any required fee, and there is no longer a statement that a Fee Transmittal Form is enclosed to pay the Appeal Brief fee (since the fee for filing an Appeal Brief has already been paid). On page 7, the sub-heading

“Claim 1” has been change to “Claims 1 and 12.” On page 11, a remark about claim 12 has been added at the bottom of the page saying that the appellants’ claim 12 includes the limitations of claim 1 and therefore is distinguished from Mishima for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1. The sub-heading “Claim 5” has been move from page 11 to page 12 and changed to “Claims 5 and 16”. On page 12, the sub-headings “Claim 12“ and “Claim 16” and the remarks below these subheadings have been removed. On page 12, a remark about claim 16 has been added to say that appellants’ claim 16 includes the limitations of claim 5 and therefore is distinguished from Mishima for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 5. Page 18 has been re-signed. New page 23 has a heading “IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX” and a statement of “NONE.” New page 24 has a heading of “X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX” and a statement of “NONE.”

In is respectfully submitted that the changes in the Amended Appeal Brief are in accordance with the recommended practice of MPEP 1205.02; namely, “Claims argued as a group should be placed under a subheading identifying the claims by number.” (MPEP 1205.02, Rev. 3, August 2005, 1st full paragraph, left-hand column of page 1200-15.) “If there is no evidence being relied upon by appellant in the appeal, then an evidence appendix should be included with the indication ‘none.’” (MPEP 1205.02, Rev. 3, August 2005, 2nd full paragraph, right-hand column of page 1200-15.) “If there are no such copies of decisions being submitted in the appeal, then a related proceedings appendix should be included with the indication ‘none.’” (MPEP 1205.02, Rev. 3, August 2005, 3rd full paragraph, right-hand column of page 1200-15.)

Serial No.: 10/038,949
Reply to Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief

Please charge any required fee to EMC Corporation Deposit Account No. 05-0889,
Order No. EMC-01-078.

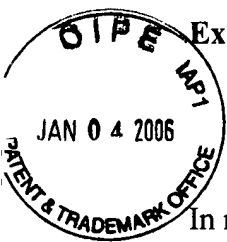
7 Jan. 2006

Respectfully submitted,



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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Oguz et al.

Serial No.: 10/038,949 Confirm 2180

Filed: 12/31/2001

For: Edge Detection Based on Variable-
 Length Codes of Block Coded Video

Group Art Unit: 2613

Examiner: Lee, Y. Young

Atty. Dkt. No.: 10830.0079.NPUS00

AMENDED APPEAL BRIEF

TO THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Sir:

This brief is in support of the appeal filed Aug. 18, 2005, from the decision of the Examiner in the Final Official Action dated May 20, 2005. Please deduct any required fee from EMC Corporation Deposit Account No. 05-0889, Order No. EMC-01-078.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is EMC Corporation, by virtue of an assignment recorded at Reel 012469, Frame 0669.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-48 have been presented for examination.

Claims 1, 5, 10-12, 16, 20, and 21 have been finally rejected, and are being appealed.

Claims 2-4, 6-9, 13-15, and 17-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim.

Claims 22-47 have been cancelled.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendment after final rejection has been filed.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The appellants' invention provides very fast and computationally efficient methods of edge detection for block coded video and scene change detection for MPEG video. (Appellants' specification, page 39, lines 11-13.)

The appellants' invention of claim 1 is a method of detecting edges in a compressed video sequence. The compressed video sequence includes at least one frame of block encoded video data. The frame of block encoded video data includes variable-length codes for transform coefficients of blocks of pixels in the compressed video sequence. The transform coefficients include a respective DC coefficient for each of the blocks of pixels. Each respective DC coefficient for at least some of the blocks of pixels is encoded as a respective variable-length code having a length indicating a certain range of differences in DC coefficient values between adjacent ones of the blocks of pixels. The method includes decoding only the length of the

respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of at least some of the blocks of pixels in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of the at least some of the blocks of pixels, and performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of the at least some of the blocks of pixels for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of the at least some of the blocks of pixels. (Appellants' specification, page 4, line 19, to page 5, line 12.)

The appellants' invention of claim 12 is a method of detecting edges in a compressed video sequence. The compressed video sequence includes at least one I-frame of MPEG video data. The I-frame of MPEG video data includes variable-length codes for DCT coefficients of 8x8 pixel blocks in the image. The DCT coefficients include a respective DC coefficient for each of the 8x8 pixel blocks. Each respective DC coefficient for at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks is encoded as a respective variable-length code having a length indicating a certain range of differences in DC coefficient values between adjacent ones of the 8x8 pixel blocks. The method includes decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of the at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of the at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks, and performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of the at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks for producing at least one

respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of the at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks. (Appellants' specification, page 5, line 13, to page 6, line 6.)

For example, the Appellants' FIG. 3, reproduced below, shows logic for producing a luminance or chrominance edge signal. If the current block is the first block in the slice, then an inverter 41 and an AND gate 42 set the edge signal to a logic zero. Otherwise, a decoder 43 decodes the code length of the dct_dc_size_luminance or dct_dc_size_chrominance variable-length code. A comparator 44 compares the code length to a length threshold to produce the luminance or chrominance edge signal. The comparator 44 produces a logic 1 when the code length is equal to or greater than the length threshold. (Appellants' specification, page 17, lines 11-17.)

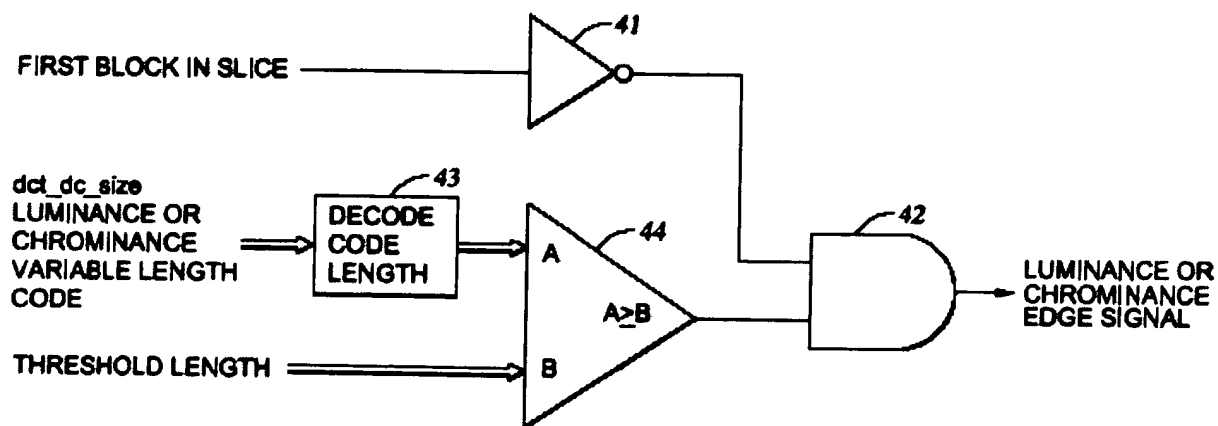


Fig. 3

Claims 5 and 13 are dependent claims that define using a thinning filter for filtering the respective bits indicating the edges. A thinning filter 21 (FIG. 1) receives edge indications from the edge detector 20, and eliminates some of the less significant edge indications. The thinning filter in effect refines the initial edge information and produces information that can be visualized as edge graph information. (Appellants' specification, page 10, lines 16-21.) The elimination of the less significant edge indications produces a frame of bits that is more representative of the distinctive features of the image. (Appellants' specification, page 15, lines 19-21.) The appellants' FIGS. 6 to 11 show examples of thinning filters, as described in appellants' specification on page 19 line 3 to page 23 line 19.

Claims 10 and 20 are dependent claims that define inspecting a lowest nonzero horizontal frequency transform coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical transform coefficient for at least one of the blocks of pixels to determine orientation of an edge associated with said at least one of the blocks of pixels. Unless there is a scarcity of computational resources, it is desirable to use information about the gradient or orientation of the edges in order to better distinguish a scene change from change in frames due to some motion of the background or objects in a frame or due to changes in lighting conditions between frames. (Appellants' specification, page 29, lines 20-23.) For example, FIG. 24 shows logic responsive to attributes of only a current block for detecting when within the current block there is (more likely than not) an almost vertical edge with a negative horizontal gradient component and when within the current block there is (more likely than not) an almost vertical edge with a positive horizontal gradient component. (Appellants' specification, page 33, lines 16-20.) FIG. 25 shows logic responsive to attributes

of only a current block for detecting when within the current block there is (more likely than not) an almost horizontal edge with a negative vertical gradient component and when within the current block there is (more likely than not) an almost horizontal edge with a positive vertical gradient component. (Appellants' specification, page 35, lines 19-23.)

Claims 11 and 21 are dependent claims that define using a lowest nonzero horizontal transform coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical transform coefficient for at least one of the blocks of pixels for computing an approximate gradient vector of an edge associated with said at least one of the blocks of pixels. For example, FIG. 26 is a flow chart of a procedure for estimating the gradient vector of an edge. In a first step 211, the processor decodes an "x" component G_{cx} of the gradient vector for the current block as the value of the lowest AC horizontal frequency DCT coefficient C_{01} for the current block with a sign inversion. In step 212, the processor decodes a "y" component G_{cy} of the gradient vector for the current block as the value of the lowest AC vertical frequency DCT coefficient C_{10} for the current block with a sign inversion. In step 213, the gradient vector of the edge is estimated as $G_{cx}x + G_{cy}y$. (Appellants' specification, page 38, line 23, to page 39, line 10.)

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

1. Whether claims 1, 5, 12, and 16 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mishima et al. U.S. Patent 5,488,418.
2. Whether claims 10, 11, 20, and 21 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Mishima et al. U.S. Patent 5,488,418 in view of Thomas U.S. Patent 6,801,672.

VII. ARGUMENT

1. **Claims 1, 5, 12, and 16 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and are not anticipated by Mishima et al. U.S. Patent 5,488,418.**

“For a prior art reference to anticipate in terms of 35 U.S.C. § 102, every element of the claimed invention must be identically shown in a single reference.” Diversitech Corp. v. Century Steps, Inc., 7 U.S.P.Q.2d 1315, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 1988), quoted in In re Bond, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566, 1567 (Fed. Cir. 1990) (vacating and remanding Board holding of anticipation; the elements must be arranged in the reference as in the claim under review, although this is not an *ipsis verbis* test).

Claims 1 and 12

With respect to the elements of the appellants’ claim 1, paragraph 9 on page 4 of the Official Action dated 2/7/05 refers to Mishima et al. Figures 26, 28, 31, 34, 50, and 53, and refers to “decoding only the length 17 of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient ...” and “a code length threshold comparison 30 upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient ...” Reference numerals 17 and 30 are found together in Mishima et al. Figures 31 and 34. Reference numeral 17 is also found in Mishima et al. Figures 26 and 28.

With respect to appellants’ claim 1, it is not seen where Mishima discloses the appellants’ step of “decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels; ...” Reference numeral 17 in Mishima, for example,

designates a “code length detector” that detects the code lengths of variable-length codes produced by a code converter 16. However, the code length detector 17 is not shown to receive the output of the code converter 16; instead, the code converter 16 is shown to receive the same input signal as the code converter 16. Mishima, col. 10, lines 51-58, indicates that the code length detector 17 detects the length of the variable-length code simultaneously with the encoding of the variable length code by the code converter 16. Therefore, the code length detector 17 does not “decode” the length of any variable-length code.

It is not seen where Mishima discloses the appellants’ step of “performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels.” Reference numeral 30 in Mishima, for example, designates a threshold comparator, but this threshold comparator is shown to receive the output of an accumulation adder 19 instead of the output of the code length detector 17. From the written description in Mishima, it is understood that the output of the comparator 30 indicates whether an accumulated total of code lengths causes an overflow over an m-byte boundary or partition used for error-correction encoding. In Mishima FIG. 31 this condition is detected in order to insert a special code when the overflow occurs so there is no symbol change during the decoding process. (See Mishima, col. 14, line 64 to col. 15 line 44, and col. 26 lines 39-43, and Abstract lines 8-11). Therefore, the threshold comparator 30 in Mishima does not perform a code length threshold comparison upon the length of a variable-

length code of a DC coefficient for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with a block of pixels.

Moreover, if the comparator 30 in Mishima would compare the threshold C' to the code length of a variable-length code of a single DC coefficient (rather than an accumulated total of the code lengths for a series of variable-length codes), the output of the comparator 30 would not necessarily indicate whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with a block of pixels. The threshold C' is disclosed in Mishima as being set so that the output of the comparator 30 indicates whether an accumulated total of code lengths causes an overflow over an m-byte boundary or partition used for error-correction encoding. One would expect that the threshold C' would be much higher than the maximum code length for a single DC coefficient so that the partition would be large enough to contain at least the code for one DC coefficient. There would be a serious performance problem if the code length of a single DC coefficient would cause overflow over the partition used for error correction. (E.g., the process of moving the variable-length code from one partition to the next, as described in Mishima col. 15, lines 34 to 37, would be inoperative because the variable-length code would never all fit in the next partition.) If the threshold C' is set higher than the maximum code length for the DC coefficient and the comparator would compare the threshold C' to the code length of a variable-length code of a single DC coefficient, then the output of the comparator 30 would not indicate whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with a block of pixels.

With respect to the Examiner's Response to Arguments on pages 3 to 4 of the Final Official Action dated May 20, 2005, the appellants respectfully point out that the Examiner

must not only make requisite findings, based on the evidence of record, but must explain the reasoning by which the findings are deemed to support the asserted rejection. See In re Lee, 277 F.3d 1338, 1343, 61 U.S.P.Q. 2d, 1430, 1433-34 (Fed. Cir. 2002). For example, in response to the appellants' argument that element 17 of Mishima et al does not "decode", paragraph 8 on page 3 of the Final Official Action says: "However, Examiner does not rely on element 17 to teach such capability because the decoding process is already disclosed in Figure 22. Element 17 merely illustrates the concept of such common detection of the length of variable-length code."

Without reliance on element 17 of Mishima et al., the Examiner has not identified anything else that possibly may be performing appellant's claimed step of "decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels ...". It is not seen where that the decoding process of Figure 22 of Mishima et al. is decoding "in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels..." It is not seen where "an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge ..." is produced by "decoding only the length ..." Nor is the decoding process of Figure 22 of Mishima et al. arranged with the comparator 30 in Mishima et al. or anything performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient" as further recited in appellants' claim 1. In other words, the Examiner has the burden to not only identify things or processes in Mishima et al. that

perform the two operations of the respective two paragraphs of appellants' claim 1 but also must show that such things or processes are arranged in Mishima as they are recited in appellants' claim

1. See In re Bond, *supra*.

Paragraph 9 on page 3 of the Final Official Action suggests that a threshold comparator receiving the output of the code length detector is not recited in the rejected claims. Appellants' claim 1, however, recites "decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code ..." and "performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code .." The burden of showing that elements are arranged in the reference as in the claim under review cannot be avoided because the claimed elements cannot be specifically identified in the reference. It is the Examiner's burden to show that Mishima performs a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code.

Paragraph 10 on page 4 of the Final Official Action suggests that the specifics of Mishima's comparator 30 are not pertinent to the applicants' claim language. However, it is the Examiner's burden to show that Mishima discloses a "code length threshold comparison ... for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels."

The appellants' claim 12 includes the limitations of claim 1 and therefore is distinguished from Mishima for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Claims 5 and 16

With reference to the appellants' claim 5, Mishima et al. discloses the use of filters 81, 82, 83, and 84, which Mishima says are band-division and thinning filters. (Mishima, column 25, lines 34-55.) However, these filters 81, 82, 83, 84 are understood to be filtering the blocked video signal in order to extract low or high frequency band signals in respective horizontal and vertical directions. It is not seen where Mishima discloses that these filters are filtering "the respective bits indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels," i.e., the bits that are output from a threshold comparator, as recited in claim 1. In reply to paragraph 11 on page 4 of the Final Official Action, these respective bits are not simply any bits in the processing of a digital video sequence.

The appellants' claim 16 includes the limitations of claim 5, and therefore claim 16 is distinguished from Mishima for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 5.

2. Claims 10, 11, 20, and 21 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Mishima et al. U.S. Patent 5,488,418 in view of Thomas U.S. Patent 6,801,672.

The policy of the Patent and Trademark Office has been to follow in each and every case the standard of patentability enunciated by the Supreme Court in Graham v. John Deere Co., 148 U.S.P.Q. 459 (1966). M.P.E.P. § 2141. As stated by the Supreme Court:

Under § 103, the scope and content of the prior art are to be determined; differences between the prior art and the claims at issue are to be ascertained; and the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art resolved. Against this background, the obviousness or nonobviousness of the subject matter is determined. Such secondary considerations as commercial success, long felt but unsolved needs, failure of others, etc., might be utilized to give light to the circumstances surrounding the origin of the subject matter sought to be patented. As indicia of obviousness or nonobviousness, these inquiries may have relevancy.

148 U.S.P.Q. at 467.

The problem that the inventor is trying to solve must be considered in determining whether or not the invention would have been obvious. The invention as a whole embraces the structure, properties and problems it solves. In re Wright, 848 F.2d 1216, 1219, 6 U.S.P.Q.2d 1959, 1961 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Mishima et al. relates to encoders for encoding a video signal used in television or the like, and to a decoder for decoding encoded data which is recorded on a recording medium. (Col. 1, lines 4-7.) An encoder counts the length of data produced by variable-length encoding, and time-division multiplexes information of the data length to the variable-length encoded data. An encoder time-division multiplexes information of the number of bits after a fixed partition used in the error-correction encoding to the initial bit of a variable-length code to a variable-length encoded data, and transmits them. An encoder is also described which, when a variable-length code for one symbol of the variable-length encoding extends over a partition used in the error-correction encoding, inserts a special code before the partition, or guarantees that the top of the partition is always at the top of the variable-length code. An encoder is also described which obtains the sum of fields and the

difference between fields, and performs on these values the orthogonal transform to encode them. (Mishima et al., Abstract.)

Pertinent portions of Mishima et al, and differences between Mishima et al. and the subject matter of the appellants' independent base claims 1 and 12, are discussed above with reference to the rejection of claim 1.

Thomas relates generally to digital image processing, and more particularly to a system and method for removing noise from color images using wavelets. (Thomas, col. 1, lines 6-8.) A wavelet transform is applied to a color image to generate sets of wavelet transform coefficients for multiple channels. Edge maps are produced for the channels from the sets of wavelet transform coefficients. An edge likelihood map is generated based on at least one edge map. The edge likelihood map is applied to the sets of wavelet transform coefficients to generate sets of filtered wavelet transform coefficients. A de-noised color image is reconstructed from the sets of filtered wavelet transform coefficients. (Thomas, abstract.)

The Official Action dated 2/7/05 cited Thomas for a teaching of an inspection method with reference to Thomas Figures 2 and 8 to determine orientation of edge for computing an approximate gradient vector of an edge associated with at least one of the pixel blocks. The Official Action concludes that a person of ordinary skill in the art, having both the references of Mishima et al and Thomas before him/her, to exploit the well known gradient vector computational technique as taught by Thomas in the edge detection method of Mishima et al. in order to provide a fast and computationally efficient method of edge detection for block coded video and scene change detection for MPEG video. Appellants respectfully disagree. As set out

above with reference to claim 1, Mishima lacks a disclosure of the two steps recited in the base claims 1 and 12. Thomas fails to supply these missing elements, which under 35 U.S.C. 112 paragraph 4, are incorporated by reference into appellants' claims 10, 11, 20, and 21.

Furthermore, if a person of ordinary skill were given both the references of Mishima et al. and Thomas and told to combine them to perform edge detection for block coded video and scene change detection for MPEG coded video, the person of ordinary skill would not be motivated to practice the appellants' claimed method. Instead, the person of ordinary skill would practice a substantially different method. Thomas teaches that one can compute wavelets that are partial derivatives of smoothed versions of the input signal, and that can be combined to form gradient vectors that can be used to locate edges at a particular scale. (Thomas, col. 6, line 34 to col. 7, lines 14.) Edges are located at points where the modulus (magnitude) of the gradient vector is maximum along a line pointing in the direction of the gradient. Spatially sampled version of the edge gradient modulus (magnitude) and angle are determined from the resulting wavelet coefficients, for each corresponding pixel location, as set out in the equations in Thomas, col. 8, lines 15-40. This edge detection method of Thomas is substantially different from the edge detection methods of appellants' claims 1 and 12.

If a person of ordinary skill were given Mishima and told to use the method of Thomas in Mishima for edge and scene change detection, the person of ordinary skill would have looked for "edge" and "scene change" in Mishima, and would have found "edge" and "scene change" with reference to Mishima's "Thirteenth Embodiment" in Mishima column 23 line 65 to Mishima column 24 line 47. There, Mishima says: "According to the specific embodiment, for example,

in the anticipation of the generated code amount, a case where an edge and a transient coexist in the block may be detected, and the combination of an HPF and LPF enables the judgment to be done.” So a person of ordinary skill, trying to do this, might use the method of Thomas in the generated code amount anticipating /comparing unit 71 so that the output of the field sum/difference blocking circuit is not selected when an edge and a transient coexist in a block. However, the combination of an HPF and LPF, and the Thomas’ edge detection method, are each substantially different from and considerably more complex than the appellants’ method of claim 1 and claim 12. For example, neither the encoder in Mishima FIG. 50(a) nor the edge detection method of Thomas appears to use a code length decoder or a code length threshold comparator. The edge detection method of Thomas appears to be entirely satisfactory for its intended purpose of generating an edge map or detecting the presence of an edge in a block. Therefore, it is not seen how the appellants’ method would have been suggested by or would have resulted from the disclosure in Thomas, either alone or in combination with Mishima.

In reply to paragraph 12 on page 4 of the Final Official Action, appellants respectfully submit that the cited references themselves do not provide sufficient motivation for a combination and modification of Mishima et al. and Thomas that would be required to arrive at appellants’ claimed invention. Given the “subtle but powerful attraction of a hindsight-based obviousness analysis,” the Federal Circuit requires a “rigorous application of the requirement for a showing of the teaching or motivation to combine prior art references.” In re Dembiczak, 175 F.3d 994, 999, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999). See also In re Lee, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344 (Fed. Cir. 2002).

Hindsight reconstruction, using the applicant's specification itself as a guide, is improper because it fails to consider the subject matter of the invention "as a whole" and fails to consider the invention as of the date at which the invention was made. The critical inquiry is whether there is something in the prior art as a whole to suggest the desirability, and thus the obviousness, of making the combination. In re Dembiczak, 175 F.3d 994, 999-1000, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999)(actual evidence and particular findings need to support the PTO's obviousness conclusion); Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil, 774 F.2d 1132, 1138, 227 U.S.P.Q. 543, 547 (Fed. Cir. 1985) ("The invention must be viewed not with the blueprint drawn by the inventor, but in the state of the art that existed at the time."); In re Fritch, 972 F.2d 1260, 1266, 23 U.S.P.Q.2d 1780, 1784 (Fed. Cir. 1992)("It is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or 'template' to piece together the teachings of the prior art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious."); Fromson v. Advance Offset Plate, Inc., 755 F.2d 1549, 1556, 225 U.S.P.Q. 26, 31 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (nothing of record plainly indicated that it would have been obvious to combine previously separate lithography steps into one process). See, for example, In re Gordon et al., 733 F.2d 900, 902, 221 U.S.P.Q. 1125, 1127 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (mere fact that prior art could be modified by turning apparatus upside down does not make modification obvious unless prior art suggests desirability of modification); Ex Parte Kaiser, 194 U.S.P.Q. 47, 48 (PTO Bd. of Appeals 1975) (Examiner's failure to indicate anywhere in the record his reason for finding alteration of reference to be obvious militates against rejection).

In view of the above, the rejection of claims 1, 5, 10-12, 16, 20, and 21 should be reversed.

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Appeal Brief

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard C. Auchterlonie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

The claims involved in this appeal are as follows:

1. A method of detecting edges in a compressed video sequence, the compressed video sequence including at least one frame of block encoded video data, the frame of block encoded video data including variable-length codes for transform coefficients of blocks of pixels in the compressed video sequence, the transform coefficients including a respective DC coefficient for each of the blocks of pixels, each respective DC coefficient for at least some of the blocks of pixels being encoded as a respective variable-length code having a length indicating a certain range of differences in DC coefficient values between adjacent ones of the blocks of pixels, wherein the method comprises:

decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels; and

performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes using a thinning filter for filtering the respective bits indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of said at least some of the blocks of pixels.

10. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the transform coefficients include respective horizontal frequency transform coefficients and respective vertical frequency transform coefficients for each block of pixels, and the method includes inspecting a lowest nonzero horizontal frequency transform coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical frequency transform coefficient for at least one of the blocks of pixels to determine orientation of an edge associated with said at least one of the blocks of pixels.

11. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the transform coefficients include respective horizontal frequency transform coefficients and respective vertical frequency transform coefficients for each block of pixels, and the method includes using a lowest nonzero horizontal frequency transform coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical frequency transform coefficient for at least one of the blocks of pixels for computing an approximate gradient vector of an edge associated with said at least one of the blocks of pixels.

12. A method of detecting edges in a compressed video sequence, the compressed video sequence including at least one I-frame of MPEG video data, the I-frame of MPEG video data including variable-length codes for DCT coefficients of 8x8 pixel blocks in the compressed video sequence, the DCT coefficients including a respective DC coefficient for each of the 8x8 pixel blocks, each respective DC coefficient for at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks being encoded as a respective variable-length code having a length indicating a certain range of differences in DC coefficient values between adjacent ones of the 8x8 pixel blocks, wherein the method comprises:

decoding only the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for each of said at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks in order to produce an indication of whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks; and

performing a code length threshold comparison upon the length of the respective variable-length code for the respective DC coefficient for said each of said at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks for producing at least one respective bit indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with said each of said at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks.

16. The method as claimed in claim 12, which includes using a thinning filter for filtering the respective bits indicating whether or not the compressed video sequence includes an edge associated with each of said at least some of the 8x8 pixel blocks.

20. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the DCT coefficients include respective horizontal frequency DCT coefficients and respective vertical frequency DCT coefficients for each of the 8x8 pixel blocks, and the method includes inspecting a lowest nonzero horizontal frequency DCT coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical frequency DCT coefficient for at least one of the 8x8 pixel blocks to determine orientation of an edge associated with said at least one of the 8x8 pixel blocks.

21. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the DCT coefficients include respective horizontal frequency DCT coefficients and respective vertical frequency DCT coefficients for each of the 8x8 pixel blocks, and the method includes using a lowest nonzero horizontal frequency DCT coefficient and a lowest nonzero vertical frequency DCT coefficient for at least one of the 8x8 pixel blocks for computing an approximate gradient vector of an edge associated with said at least one of the 8x8 pixel blocks.

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

NONE.

X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

NONE.